

Minutes
King County Rural Forest Commission
July 18, 2001
Mercerview Community Center

Commissioners present: Jean Bouffard, Gordon Bradley, Bill Kombol, Ken Konigsmark, Fred McCarty, Andrew Schwarz

Commissioners absent: Rudy Edwards, Steve Ketz, Doug McClelland

Exofficio members: Lori Grant, Nina Rivkin

Staff: Kathy Creahan, Bill Loeber, Benj Wadsworth

Guests: Louis Kahn, Matt Mattson, Dave Warren

Ken Konigsmark called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Minutes Approval

- Motion 1-701: "To adopt the June meeting minutes as written."

Ken commented that he was not at the meeting and should not be listed as present or counted in the vote.

Motion moved, seconded and approved with changes.

Chair Report

Ken reminded the Commission that there will be no meeting in August. He reported on the church/school debate at Council. The Council voted 7 to 6 in favor of Maggi Fimia's proposal, but Executive Sims is expected to veto the motion because it sets the minimum size limit for environmental restrictions at 25,000 feet, which many feel are too big.

Ken and Gordon recently met with Pam Bissonette, Nancy Hanson and Kurt Triplett to discuss the DNR/Parks merger and the management of County lands. Ken feels that it was a very productive meeting and that the management is receptive to the Commission's suggestions.

The County is initiating an alder thinning project on Taylor Mountain this summer and will begin a conifer release on Sugarloaf in the fall. Ken emphasized that this is the first time that the

County has conducted forest management on County land. He feels that it is a big step in terms of what the Commission has been promoting.

Staff Report

Benj announced that the flights over the forest have been scheduled for August 27 and 30, with a rain date for the 31st. He encouraged Commissioners who have not flown to join a flight. He plans to invite the Councilmembers and members of Congress. Ken emphasized the value of these flights as educational tools.

Benj sent out the final draft of the forest policy and reminded the Commission that this is the last chance to provide comment before it is sent on to the Executive's office. He emphasized that this is a very important document that will guide forest management in the future.

Benj distributed the revised administrative procedures that reflect the changes that the Commission adopted at the June meeting.

Benj announced that the forestry staff is sending out invitations to groups that might be interested in hosting a slideshow by the Forest Outreach Network. He intends to send the invitation to the environmental groups and later to city councils.

The new Commission members are scheduled to meet before the Council Committee on Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space on August 21. Members up for reappointment will be invited to attend that meeting as well. Benj is still looking for someone to represent the consumer end of forest products. Council staff hopes to use this meeting as an opportunity to discuss forest issues with the Committee.

Benj reported that the Conservation Futures Citizens Oversight Committee has made recommendations for the allocation of Conservation Futures funds. The Committee awarded \$750,000 toward the purchase of development rights on the Ames Lake forest and \$500,000 toward the Rock Creek vision. They did not recommend funding acquisition of the Mitchell-Hill parcels.

KCDNR is currently evaluating all of the King County land that has until now been managed by Parks. The lands will be categorized based on the objectives for which they are managed; active recreation, passive recreation, ecological preservation, or resource use. Staff will be looking to the Commission for input on this process.

TDC changes

Mark Sollito gave an update of the TDC program. He summarized the program's successes at Mitchell-Hill, Sugarloaf and (pending) in the Denny Triangle. To date, the program has preserved 724 acres with a value of \$10 million for a public cost of \$1.7 million, which will decrease if/when the Denny Triangle deal with the Bentol Corporation is completed and the TDC bank is reimbursed.

The TDC program needs to be converted from a pilot program to a permanent program by the end of October. The proposed ordinance would accomplish this while making the following changes:

- Parcels in the FPD would be allowed to be sending sites. The ordinance establishes the specific mechanics as to how that would work.
- Property in the unincorporated urban area would no longer be allowed as sending sites.
- Virtual density bonus in the Rural Forest Focus Areas is maintained. Property in APD also gets 1 per 5 density for transfer.
- Method for determining density changed to address existence of legal lots. So, land in rural area or FPD that has already been segregated below 1 per 5 will get density based on number of legal lots.

Ken suggested that the RFC should write a letter in support of the ordinance. Several people agreed that it would make sense to write a general letter without getting into the details of the changes. Bill Kombol suggested that the RFC comment on the need to fund the TDC bank. Kathy Creahan suggested that the Commission should comment on certain specifics such as the elimination of urban sending sites.

Ken and Benj will draft a letter supporting the TDC program and distribute it for comment. The Council will not act on the ordinance until September.

Forest Certification follow-up

Benj expressed the need to have a follow-up discussion about the presentations on forest certification at the June meeting. He feels that there may be ways that certification could help the County keep lands forested. Also, Benj was recently contacted by Theresa Koppang in the

King County Solid Waste Division. Theresa works on the Built Green program and is in the process of developing a promotion to encourage the sale of certified forest products by retailers in King County. She was contacted by Jeff Wartell at the Certified Forest Products Council to see if the County was considering certification on County land. Benj feels that the Commission needs to discuss the feasibility of certifying County forestland, and also the possibility of the County assisting small landowners with the certification process. Possibilities include certifying Bill and Kristi to certify landowners or providing cost share funding for landowners to go through the certification process.

Andy commented that it would be productive for King County foresters to be able to certify landowners. Jean questioned which certification process would be appropriate, FSC or SFI. Louis Kahn commented that he has heard conflicting opinions about certification and is not clear whether or not it will benefit small landowners. Bill Kombol feels that it would be appropriate for any forestland managed under the WA Forest Practice Rules to be certified. He feels that WA State regulations are tough enough in comparison to forest practices in other parts of the world. He feels that the Forest Practice Act should be certified and any lands that are managed in accordance with the Act would therefore be certified as well. Andy compared the demand for certified forest products to the organic farming movement of the 1980s. The demand for organic food today is far greater than any projections that were made in the 80s. He feels that the demand for certified forest products might be similar in the future.

Ken suggested that the Commission continue the discussion at the next meeting, as they needed to begin the planned field trip.

Field Trip

Stop 1: Rock Creek Valley overlook. Mike Brathovde gave a summary of the activities of the Friends of Rock Creek. Discussion ensued about the intentions of Plum Creek, a large forestland owner in the Valley. Plum Creek has sold off much of their land in the past decade and will likely continue to do so.

Stop 2: Bill Kombol's thinning project. Bill explained the details of the commercial thin that he recently did on his land; including cost and the amount of money generated.

Stop 3: Sugarloaf Mountain. Bill Loeber gave a summary of the recent TDC acquisition of Sugarloaf and the County's conifer release project.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

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Next meeting - Wednesday, September 19 at 10:00 at Mercerview Community Center